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Getting involved in planning in Northern Ireland: Protecting other wildlife from development

Development proposals affect all plant and animal communities, not just birds. When you are objecting to a planning application, or looking to secure protection for an area as a wildlife site, consider other animals and plants found there.

As a bird conservation organisation, we don't have the expertise to give detailed advice about how planning applications affect other wildlife. The purpose of this leaflet is to guide you to the organisation most qualified to answer your queries.

Wildlife law is straightforward with respect to birds as all wild birds are protected by law (but see our leaflet "*Protecting birds from development*" to understand the limitations of this protection). With other animal groups and plants, the presence and degree of legal protection to any one species varies.

We recommend that you consult the relevant specialist organisation to find out what legal protection is given to the species you are interested in. A leaflet entitled *Wildlife Law and You* explains more and is available from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) website (<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/daera-2016-wildlife-law-and-you.pdf>).

The presence of many groups of plants and animals can add weight to your case by giving a higher degree of legal protection to the land that you are interested in protecting. In fact, sometimes they can help your case more than the presence of birds. This is because birds are deemed mobile and not tied to a piece of habitat except while they are nesting.

In other words, if a piece of feeding area or a roost site disappears, birds are able to move elsewhere easily. However, this is considered not to be the case for plants, invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and even some mammals. Consequently, bat roosts are protected all year, regardless of whether bats use them at the time or not, and a wetland with great crested newts or a meadow with rare orchids cannot be changed without risking the demise of that local population.

The following list gives contact details for a range of useful specialist organisations.

The Northern Ireland Bat Group

c/o CEDaR (Centre for Environmental Data and Recording)
CEDaR Data Administrator,
National Museums Northern Ireland
Cultra, Holywood, Co. Down, BT18 0EU
Tel: 028 9039 5264
Email: secretary@bats-ni.org.uk
Website: www.bats-ni.org.uk

Mammal Society

Records Centre Manager
CEDaR
Ulster Museum
Botanic Gardens
Belfast
BT9 5AB
Email: info@mammal.org.uk
Website: www.mammal.org.uk ;
www.habitas.org.uk/nimars

The Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland

1 Dufferin Court
Dufferin Avenue
Bangor
County Down
BT20 3BX
Tel: 028 9127 5787
Email: northernireland@woodlandtrust.org.uk
Website: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Ulster Wildlife Trust

3 New Line
Crossgar
County Down
BT30 9EP
Tel: 028 9045 4094
Email: info@ulsterwildlife.org
Website: www.ulsterwildlife.org

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Castle Espie Wetland Centre
78 Ballydrain Road
Comber
County Down
BT23 6EA
Tel: 028 9187 4146
Email: info.castlespie@wwt.org.uk
Website: www.wwt.org.uk

Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland

Catherine Bertrand
Slemish Complex
Knockbracken Healthcare Park
Saintfield Road, Belfast
BT8 8BH
Tel: 07584597690
Email: cbertrand@butterfly-conservation.org
Website: www.butterfly-conservation.org

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Wildlife Officer
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Lower Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 2JA
Tel: 03002007856
Website: www.doeni.gov.uk/niea

Dragonfly Ireland

Brian Nelson
Department of Zoology
Ulster Museum
Botanic Gardens
Belfast
BT9 5AB
Tel: 028 9038 3145
Website: www.habitas.org.uk/dragonflyireland

Plantlife International

14 Rollestone Street
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 1DX
Tel: 01722 342730
Email: enquiries@plantlife.org.uk
Website: www.plantlife.org.uk